Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Sir, at the very outset, I should express my unstinted gratitude to the Hon'ble Mover of the Cut for having given me an opportunity to explain the guiding policy of the Government in the management of the State forests.

The Cut Motion, as it reads, assumes a policy which has no bearing at all on what is being pursued, and the mover has begged the question in continuing his criticism on the so called policy of the Government in the strain in which it was done. I crave the indulgence of the House to allow me to repeat what I have explained during the last Budget Session about the measures of conservancy and the exploitation policy that is being followed under the changed conditions of the war emergency. Producton of timber, as everybody knows, has to be from the felling of trees and the important extraction works undertaken by the Department are the following inescapable items.

(*i*) Hill Paddy clearances

(*ii*) Thinnings and Selection-cum-Improvement Fellings. I take leave to explain to the House and attempt to remove all possible mis-apprehension about the Forest policy of the Goverament, that, in spite of the vast exploitation scheme undertaken and contemplated under the several categories, the Forest Capital, which is of course, the National Asset, has not been disturbed. Figures alone might, on a casual observation, tend to give apparent cause for disturbed feelings, and added to this, the visual impression of forests cleared, of movements of vast quantities of major produce, would, at the every first sight, by virtue of their very bulk, invite a charge of reckless denudation against the Department. But, I assure the House that, the Department has merely taken advantage of the economic conditions consequent on the war, and exploitation has been restricted purely from obligatory sources and chiefly of inferior over mature stock of species, which certainly, had never a market during the pre-war days. Owing to the blocking of timber-imports, there has been intensified utilization of the lesser-known species of our timber. Thus, against the mere half-a-dozen species extracted in pre-war days, the present extraction has expended to include over two dozen species, and the fact is that what has been considered as dead Capital, is being converted into liquid cash, when the doing is good. I will be clear when I say, that out of the total quantity of timber supplied for war purposes, the proportion of superior species of timber has been a negligible fraction.

It is true that price of timber is high at present, because it is based purely on speculative standards and it is quite possible, as it should be, that our supply rates do dot compare with black-market rates, but we are getting very good price for items which would not only have been unsaleable, but also the extraction of which, even at a financial sacrifice, is essential in the interest of the forest development. Regarding regeneration works, the programme has been intensified and against 400—500 acres which used to be normally planted up annually in 1119, 1500 acres were regenerated and it is going to be increased further.

The Hon'ble Member for Vadakkancheri, I am afraid, has been myself to believe that the teak-wood ballies now extracted would produce timber for posterity. In fact, their retention would have hampered production of good quality timber from our plantations. We have been labouring under the difficulty of financing the thinning operations in young plantations and the extraction of these ballies, war or no war, was absolutely necessary for the proper development of our teak plantations and there is no demand for these ballies in our State. But, war conditions opened up a market for this item as also for other unseleable materials and the department has availed of the opportunity of serving the war-needs and, at the same time, benefitting in the improvement of our forests by the elimination of over-mature and inferior stock. The clear-felling of ten and odd acres of teak plantations in Machad was done as the growth the area was found unfit for the production of large sized timber and the financial results of short-term cappies rotations under which the area is proposed to be worked is found to be most attractive. I make bold to claim that Forest Conservancy is enforced to the maximum at present, in spite of the abnormal figures relating to timber extraction. I do not think that posterity will thank so much those who claim that inferior stoke should be retained for them. In fact, the removal of the inferier stock leaves chances for the advent of better-quality stock under proper management either by natural process or by artificial planting. During pre-war days, the revenue of the department was naturally, very small the average for 5 years preceding the war being less than 5 lakhs with a nett revenue of near about a lakh of rupees. The figures for revenue in 1119 are 22.9 lakhs gross and 10.2 lakhs net. So, naturally, it would look as though the department has covered about 6 years of its normal pre-war existence in one year. I may say that the pre-war figures of extractioninclud-ed mainly species like teak, rosewood and a few items ol superior jungle-wood like irul and pongu only. It has not been possible to put into the market even a single cubic feet of Kalpine, Vellapine

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kara, Kalamavu and other inferior species. In fact owing to want of market and consequently,for want of extraction the proportion of the stock of inferior species had become clarmingly large and the present war situation has offered an opportunity for the economic exploitation of these which I dare say is in the very interest of posterity. Doubts were raised about forest capital being depleted. It is, as I have mentioned already, only the dead capital that is being converted into liquid cash which, it would never have been possible, but for the present emergency. The Forest Department was considered to be a revenue producing department and during the pre-war days when timber market was suffering a heavy slump, the Department had to keep its need above waters, make up a revenue, and that had to be done by offering on the market superior species of timber in much large quantities than what is being done now.

The Hon'ble Member for Kunnamkulam, referred to certain doubts as to whether Malabar was producing as much timber as Cochin does, for war supplies. I may answer that if Malabar does not produce it, it is only because there they are not able to do it owing to conditions which our quite outside the control of the custodians of the Forest interests there. In fact, it is the inability of Malabar to offer for war-supplies what the interest there would like to, that has helped us to benefit ourselves.

I may at th is juncture, remind the House that His Highness the Maharaja has been pleased to place the ent ire resources of the State towards war-efforts, the successful prosecution of which, we are all as anxious of and this untimely doubts and attempts at caution about our war-effrots such as these expressed in the House would tempt those who may want to use it as such to impute on us the guilt of a mere half-hearted support to a cause even dearer to posterity than to the present generation.

Sir, I feel this cut the unkindest and request that the House may be pleased to grant the additional allotment requested for.

Mr. Joseph Pettah *(Adur)* : Sir, I am very glad to be able to congratulate the Conservator of Forests on the very able presentation that he has made of a very losing case. But only one complaint I have against him. He need not have brought into this House the name of the benign Ruler His Highness the Maharaja and the policy which His Highness has introduced because if we say anything on this motion indirectly it comes to a reflection on His Highness. Only on that point I have a complaint against him.

On this side I am very glad to find that only the Member for Chalakkudy found it fit to oppose the propositon. It is because he represents Chalakkudi and the neighbouring places where these forests are. It is proper for him to do so but he was pleased to say that I was misled in many of my statements. But then when I consider the whole situation I would very humbly submit that it was he that was misinformed on many of the major items of information.

In this case the Conservator of Forests has put before us the same old information that he was pleased to present on the occasion of the Budget discussion. I do not find any new information there. The old story is there that it is only soft wood that is extracted or it is by far the largest proportion there and the really good varieties of wood are not extracted or sent away. What I understand is that if we consider Parambikulam area our teak supplies are fairly exhausted, at least in the accessible places. In inaccessible areas there will still be a few teaks. And then passing on to Vadakkancheri the teak gardens are not merely thinned as is supposed by the Hon'ble Member for Chalakkudi but there is a general wholesale cutting down which, I am afraid, will be very much resented by posterity.

The Hon'ble Member for Chalakkudi was pleased to give us a parable from the New Testament about the talons. I could give him both a parable and a fable. The parable is that of the prodigal Son. The prodigal Son took his patrimony and wasted that in foreign countries and found himself in utter grief. The fable is that of the goose which laid the golden egg. Not content with one golden egg a day the goose was killed and no gold was found. The parable and the fable may be taken for what it is worth.

Now, with regard to the example here of Travancore and British Malabar, I did not mean to say that we should follow Travancore or British Malabar. When we say that the wisdom only dawned upon us and that wisdom never occurred to the Travancore Government or that wisdom could not be put into force by the Malabar Authorities, when we take pride of the fact that we only had that wisdom I think perhaps it is too much of a tall claim. Sir, I am one of those who believe that we should do our best to help the case of the war. I said so yesterday and even now I reiterate that whatever is possible for us must be done to help the war effort. But there must be a limit to our sacrifices. If we are drawing upon our capital in such a fashion as would tell upon the wealth and the happiness of the future generations I am afraid we shall be regarded as sinners at the Bar of Posterity.

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One word more about the prices. I understand that there ia a competetive price for teak. In this connection what I understand is this. When teak trees are cut down the military wants such portions as are perfectly sound and out of five candies of timber only one or to candies could satisfy the requirements of the military and then whatever remains is sold to the contractors. I would like to know what the rates are. It would seem that the military is given these portions at a rate which is even lower than what we get for the other portions. Now what I say is let us give timber, if at all we should give it, at competitive rates and then if we want to do anything more of service a certain amount of money may be regarded as contribution made by the Government of Cochin to the war efforts. That would show what our contribution is. But to sell teak at prices which are not competitive I should think that is not a business like way of doing things.

It is argued by the Conservator that our forest capital is not at all disturbed. Well I might have believed the statement had it not been for palpable evidence to the contrary that there is a good deal of destruction going on. But I have moved the cut not to score a point against the Government nor to embarrass the Government in any manner. I only wanted to urge upon the Government the seriousness of the situtation and the peril that is ahead and I belive I have placed facts before them which they will consider. Though officially perhaps they may have to take up a certain attitued in this house I believe the possition will be considered in all its bearing and the policy now adopted will be reconsidered and modified.

Above all I would request the Government to expedite that policy of reaforestation. Cutting down we have already done and the destruction is already an accomplished fact. The only remedy now, therefore is to do some constructive work so that we may at least have that argument before the Bar of Posterity. A devolepment section has been constituted and I am glad that the Government have done so. Let the attempt be expedited and let us try to have as much area reaforested as possible so that in a small measure at least we may make amends for the huge destruction we have made. With these remarks I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

Cut motion by leave withdrawn

Demand put and carried

32. Rs 15,000 under "12—1—forests A1 b1"

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Sir, I rise to move for an additional allotment of Rs. 15,000 under "12—1— Forests A1 b1". Consequent on the creation of a Fuel Supply Division for the efficient management of the Fuel Supply Scheme in the mofussil area and Municipal towns it is necessary to engage additional staff. The total expenditure in 1120 on account of this is estimated to be Rs. 32,550 but the amount provided for in the Budget has been only Rs. 10,128. An additional provision of Rs. 22,422 is therefore necessary besides dearness allowance. As, however, the full sanctioned staff is not functioning now an additional allotment of Rs. 15,000 only is considered necessary. I request the House may be pleased to grant the allotment.

Demand put and carried

33. Rs. 9000 under 12—1—Forests A b c

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forsets):* For the efficient working of the Post-War Forest Policy a new Development Division has been created and the necessary staff has been appointed. The estimated amount is Rs. 11,260 including pay and allowances and the staff has been sanctioned. For meeting all the expenditure in connection with the working of the Post War Forest Policy. As all the appointments have not been made an additional allotment of Rs. 9,000 only is considered necessary under this item.

Mr. V. K. Bhaskara Menon *(Cranganur):* May I know what exactly is the new Post War Policy as opposed to the present policy or the past policy?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Under the Post War Development Scheme the following works are proposed. Survey demarcation of the forest areas into units for management. At present the total area of the forest is about 582 squre miles of which only about 100 squre miles are actually surveyed. The rest are unsurveyed. It is also porposed to develop new communication lines and realign the existing ones. The management of the village reserves which are required to cater to the needs of the agriculturist. Villager has also to be intensified so that they may serve the real purpose for which they are intended. A stringent policy ofland conservancy fixing the limits of level to prevent erosion and soil waste. Development of colonies with-in the Forest area. Stabilisation of Industries depending upon forest produce after the war.

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Vigorous reaforestation in forest areas cleared for Hill Paddy, etc. Organisation and development of a nucleus of forest reserves and museum attached to the Department. These are a few items.

Demand put and carried

34. Rs. 10,000 under "12—1—Forests B 8a"

Mr. S Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Sir, I rise to move for an additional allotment of Rs. 10,000 for the payment of dearness allowance to the staff sanctioned for the fuel supply and development divisions.

Demand put and carried

35. Rs. 1,620 under "12—2—Tramway B1 b1"

36. Rs. 1,485 under "12—2—Tramway B2 b3"

37. Rs. 1,620 under "12—2—Tramway B2 d1"

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* I may be allowed to move the next three items together.

Mr. President: Yes.

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* It is anticipated that three lakhs of ballies and 20,000 telegraph posts will have to be supplied to the Military. It would increase the tramway service three times and an additional staff has to be entertained. A list of the staff to be entertained is given in the note to the Standing Finance Committee. There is no provision for this in the Budget as it was not anticipated. I request that a total amount of Rs. 4,725 may kindly be sanctioned.

Demands put and carried

Legislative Business—Government Bills

The Cochin Panchayat Bill

Mr. T. K. Nayar *(Minister for Rural Development):* Sir, in presenting the Select Committee Report on the Cochin Panchayat Bill I move that the Bill as modified by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon *(Advocate-General):* I second it.

Motion put and carried

Mr. T. K. Nayar *(Minister for Rural Development):* Sir, there are certain amendments. We propose to discuss these amendments this evening so that the business might be expedited. I request the Chair to postpone the conidertaion of the Bill clause by clause to tomorrow.

Mr. President: Yes.

The Cochin Employment of Children Bill

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon *(Advocate—General):* Sir, I wish to present the Cochin Employment of Children Bill as reported on by the Select Committee and in presenting that report I wish to confine myself to a brief statement of facts so that the House may be appraised of the small changes made by the Select Committee, which sat to consider this Bill. Clause 3 of the bill which contemplated the prohibition of the employment of children who have not completed their 15th year in occupations connected with the transport of passengers, goods or mails by wailway was considered by the select committee to be rather too wide in its scope and therefore regard being had to local conditions and on account of the fact that some members of the select committee considered that certain people are earning their livelihood by such work, that clause has been deleted. Similiarly when we come to the schedule appended to this Act two small changes have been made. One is with regard to Beedi making. It was considered that there is no harm at all in cutting the leaves and similar work connected with Beedi making.

Then with regard to the manufacture of matches. In the Original bill children were pohibited from employment in the manufacture of matches, explosives and fireworks. The Select Comittee has taken away "matches" from the schedule. There is no harm in employing children in making the box and the pasting of paper which has nothing to do with the actual tipping of the sticks which alone is considered to be dangerous. The Select committee considered that there were a large number of children employed in this work and that they should not be divested of their means of livelihood regard being had to conditions prevailng in Trichur and ther places. The Select Committee resolved to make these three changes. I

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